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Abstract. This article identifies imbalances in the balancing of the merits of an upcoming trip by the United States (US) president to three South Asian countries.

US president Bill Clinton has scheduled a trip to South Asia for next month. If it occurs, the trip will be the first by a US president to visit the area since 1978. Already "definites" on the schedule are India and Bangladesh. Anything but definite at the time of this writing is Pakistan. For humanitarian reasons alone, the scheduled visit to Bangladesh is not controversial. What has been controversial is the clear choice of India contrasted with the ambivalence towards Pakistan. Why so easy a decision to visit one and not the other?

The case against Pakistan as parsed from public discourse conflates strategic, moral/ethical, and US domestic political issues. First, the US cannot be seen to favor a government formed through a military coup and consisting largely of military officials and civilians largely controlled by the military. Second, Pakistan harbors and aids political, military, and paramilitary operatives that engage in violence and the threat of violence against noncombatants, noncombatant materiel, and combatants and noncombatant materiel in a noncombatant status to achieve some of its foreign and domestic political objectives--viz., terrorism. Examples of this include alleged support for the incursion and employment of military and paramilitary forces into the Indian state of Kashmir and for a recent hijacking of an Indian Airlines commercial aircraft. And the US cannot be seen supporting terrorism. Third, Pakistan has successfully developed nuclear-weapons assets--against US efforts to stymie the proliferation of nuclear weapons and associated personnel, components, and technology. Pakistan also has not formally eschewed nuclear weapons testing or--for that matter--first use of nuclear weapons. The US cannot be seen supporting a proliferator of weapons of mass destruction.

Yet, the US has supported and continues to support military and civilian governments throughout the world that can trace their origins to a military coup. Some of these are democracies and some are not. India has a regime that was democratically elected, but one that often finesses democratic concerns to support the political and religious goals (at times though sectarian violence) of some variants of Hinduism to the detriment of believers in other religions and of nonbelievers. The regime also must carefully ascertain and nurture support of its military sector. Moreover, the civilian, democratically elected government leading Pakistan before its military coup arguably left the vast masses of the underprivileged worse off than the present regime. This last reality must be addressed before a knee-jerk response of disapprobation is allowed to dominate US policy to any regime that is not supported through a particular form of democratic process.

Moreover, India certainly can be characterized as deploying and employing its own cadres of political, paramilitary, and military operatives that have dabbled in domestic and foreign terrorism. (Unfortunately, so can many other governments of the developed and developing world.) Testimonies by representatives of many domestic opposition and insurgent groups--as well as small countries adjacent to India--are just too compelling to believe otherwise. India may be doing a more effective job than Pakistan in "covering" such operations and their consequences. However, it is ironic to note that

such operations were significantly involved in the creation of Bangladesh--the "other country" in President Clinton's itinerary--from what was part of Pakistan.

In addition, India has engaged in successfully stymieing US efforts to deter proliferation of nuclear weapons and associated personnel, components, and technology. In act, India has been more successful than Pakistan in such endeavors. As well, India has not formally agreed to eschew nuclear- weapons testing.

On other matters such as the fate of Kashmir, it is Pakistan that supports third-party intervention from the US or other political entities and India that rejects such intervention. And, of course, Pakistan was a close ally of the US during much of the Cold War--and continues to desire to be an ally--while India tilted towards the Soviet Union and is much more ambivalent about its relationship with the US.

The US imbalance concerning the upcoming presidential trip should be resolved so that Pakistan is visited along with India and Bangladesh. President Clinton can use his superior communication skills to differentially signal points of agreement and contention with each country, while holding out the benefits of cooperation with the US on Issues of mutual concern. On balance's merits, this is the best approach. (See Bill Clinton's Asian itinerary. *The New York Times*, p. A30; Bond, C. F., Jr., Horn, E. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1997). A model for triadic relations. *Psychological Methods*, 2, 79-94; Clark, E. M., et al. (1998). Perceptual accuracy in the balance: The weight of the evidence and the evidence of weight. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, 15, 127-136; Goodnow, J.J. (1998). Beyond the overall balance: The significance of particular tasks and procedures for perceptions of fairness in distributions of household work. *Social Justice Research*, 11, 359-376; Krackhardt, D., & Kilduff, M. (1999). Whether close or far: Social distance effects on perceived balance in friendship networks. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 76, 770-782; Sample, S. G. (1998). Military buildups, war, and realpolitik: A multivariate model. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 42, 156-175.) (Keywords: Balance, Bangladesh, India, Nuclear Weapons, Pakistan. Terrorism.)